

AGRiVIEW



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Farm Determinations Assisting Maple Producers – Vermaple, LLC

By Noah Gilbert-Fuller, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

Vermont’s maple sugaring season has come to a close, marking another massive year for sugar makers as production and demand has continued to increase. For sugar makers, expanding and improving their enterprises is crucial in keeping up with a competitive marketplace. This includes the construction of pump houses, sugar houses, storage and processing structures that often need additional access to heat, plumbing and electricity. As a result, it can be daunting for new producers to work through different zoning bylaws as they plan out their sugaring operation.



Jamie and Hollie Curtis working hard boiling sap with their children, James Jr. and Seanna.

In the face of these upfront challenges, there are resources to support even the newest of maple producers. Vermaple, LLC is a family run and owned sugar house in Bakersfield built from the

ground up by Jamie and Hollie Curtis and their two children James Jr. and Seanna. Jamie had sugared with his grandfather growing up, and wanted to turn that passion into something he could do with

his family. Vermaple, LLC started in 2019 with around 1,750 taps, and is now tapping 9,600 trees across 20s0 acres, with plans of expanding into a 20-acre lease in 2024, adding another 1,000+ taps. This scale of production doesn’t start over night, and installing equipment infrastructure took place over multiple seasons. That’s why a timely Farm Determination, and a Farm Structure Determination, helped these farmers get the right equipment in at the right time.

Farms that fall under the definition of farming in the Vermont Required Agricultural Practices (RAPs) are regulated by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets, and provide

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Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

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The Gifts of Spring

Spring might be my favorite season in Vermont. When I think of the Green Mountains I think of the month of May. The wildflowers carpet the forest floor. Vermont's rolling hills of sugar maples are turning green. Ramps and fiddleheads offer some of the year's first food. Farm fields are many shades of green. Farmers are planting crops, gardeners are planning in earnest, and critters are returning or waking up to their habitat for another season. The birds are singing and grooming their young. The Green Mountains are once again ready to unfold into spring and summer.

We are grateful for the months ahead of us. We all know the seasons are short in the Green Mountains, but Vermonters can pack so much into spring and summer. While many of us were navigating the muddy backroads, our farmers were busy growing the first produce of the season. You can find it in the stores and at community events. Farmers markets have returned to outside venues and offer us fresh food and drink. You can also find produce, meat, maple, eggs, and dairy at your local farmstand or store. Supporting local businesses helps us all by keeping our dollars in the Green Mountains, supporting our working lands.

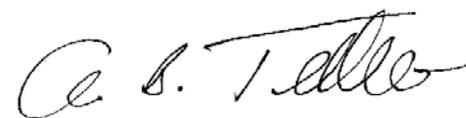
You also may want to take a trip to a nursery or greenhouse this May to find the perfect plants to light

up homes and backyards. Vermont's nursery and landscaping businesses brighten our gardens and help to feed us. They, too, color "Green" in the "Green Mountains."

As we flip the summer calendar forward to summer, keep your eye out for farm and food events across Vermont. In June we will celebrate our dairy farmers. There will be festivals, food trucks and fun events that highlight all things dairy. From the first maple creemee of the season to the first ice cream social, dairy is part of our spring and summer fun. Dairy supports our Green Mountain

economy. Those who work the land contribute to so many businesses, from hospitality to those who rely on farmers to purchase supplies, feed, and fertilizers.

We hope the weather is kind to our farmers during this short growing season. We look for sunny days, just enough rain and no big weather events in the days ahead. Let's celebrate our farmers and those who support them in the Green Mountains. We here at the Vermont Agency of Agriculture wish everyone a safe and productive spring!



Anson Tebbetts,
Secretary, Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

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ANSON TEBBETTS, Secretary
Agency of Agriculture,
Food & Markets

TERRY SMITH
Editor

FAITH RAYMOND, Managing Editor

SCOTT WATERMAN, Contributing Editor

Advertising and subscriptions:
E-mail: agr.agriview@vermont.gov

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This Month's Recipe

Egg Salad

Ingredients

- 8 large eggs
- 1/4 cup mayonnaise
- 1/4 cup dill, minced
- 2 tbsp chives, minced
- 2 tbsp Dijon mustard
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp pepper

Directions

1. Add the eggs to a saucepan and fill with cold water. Bring water to a boil and immediately remove from heat. Cover and let the eggs stand for 10-12 minutes. Take the eggs out of the water and let cool.
2. Peel and chop the eggs then add them to a medium-sized bowl.
3. Add mayonnaise, dill, chives, Dijon mustard, salt, and pepper. Mix until combined.



4. Spread on bread or use with your favorite crackers!

Agency staff shared their favorite variations - Enjoy!

- Add curry powder to the mayo, maybe some cayenne, and some crunchy things like cucumber, scallions, pickled red onion,

arugula.

- Add chopped olives and feta cheese
- Use capers and celery (chopped very small) along with the mayo and mustard
- Skip the mustard and dill, add sweet pickle relish to taste.
- Use mayo, yellow mustard, and sweet relish. The real magic happens in the process, which is to mix the mustard and mayo with the yolks similar to making deviled eggs. So basically, the egg salad becomes deviled eggs mixed in a bowl with sweet pickle relish.
- Mayo, eggs, chopped pickles, dash pickle juice, tiny dash maple syrup, pepper, tiny dash paprika
- Add capers and fresh tarragon and if feeling very rich, add a slice of really good smoked salmon or trout.

Vermont Farmworker Housing Repair Loan Program

By Champlain Housing Trust



Champlain Housing Trust is accepting applications for the Vermont Farmworker Housing Repair Loan Program (FWH). This program allows farmers to make essential repairs and necessary improvements to their farmworker housing. The goal of this program is to preserve this important affordable housing resource and to help improve the health and welfare of the farm workforce.

If you applied last round and would like to renew your application, please email Charlie Glassberg at cglassberg@getahome.org or call (802) 810-8217.

Program Overview:

- FWH will offer forgivable loans of up to \$30,000 to make necessary improvements to farmworker housing. The loans will be 0% interest, and forgiven over 10 years, as long as the improved housing continues to be main-

- tained and used for farmworker housing.
- Eligible units will include manufactured homes, stick-built houses, and apartments in barns or other outbuildings. CHT will not consider fifth wheel trailers or other motor vehicles.
- Typical health and safety related repairs/improvements can include, but are not limited to: wastewater systems, air sealing and insulation, noise mitigation measures, overcrowding relief, food prep and storage improvements, mold remediation, electrical and

- plumbing upgrades, and roof replacements.
- Support will be provided for farmers and farmworkers through UVM Extension.

Go to <https://www.getahome.org/vermont-farmworker-housing-repair-loan-program/>

Apply online: Neighborly Software Application Portal or Download a PDF Application

If you have questions, please email Charlie Glassberg at cglassberg@getahome.org or call (802) 810-8217.

Dairy Enforcement Protects All Consumers

By E.B. Flory, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

Since the late 1980s, dairy products you purchase in stores have been antibiotic free due to a nationwide rigorous testing protocol. The protocol begins with every load of milk shipped from a farm being tested for antibiotics before that milk is accepted into a dairy plant for processing. As priorities change and new industry standards are introduced, the entire industry uses both education and enforcement to ensure success. Within the dairy industry educational materials were made available to farmers and their peers while government regulations were put into place. A structure of enforcement was developed for farms when their shipment of milk tested positive for antibiotics. Enforcement consequences include not being allowed to ship milk until a milk sample is shown to be free from antibiotics, a fee structure if multiple loads of antibiotic milk is

shipped from the same farm within 12 months, and a drug residue follow up inspection conducted by a farm inspector to verify where the adulterated milk was disposed of and what caused the milk to test positive for antibiotics. Inspectors work with the producer to review how medicines for cattle are managed and best practices for preventing the issue from occurring again on their farm.

Vermont dairy farms have progressed over the decades and have made management of medical treatment for cattle a top priority. Efforts

made by Dairy Section staff and other industry resources to work with dairy farmers have yielded impressive results in Vermont. The most current data shows that in 2011 Vermont had 42 total positive loads of milk that had to be disposed of and not offered for sale to consumers. Compared to 2022, where only six positive loads of milk had to be disposed of and not offered for sale.

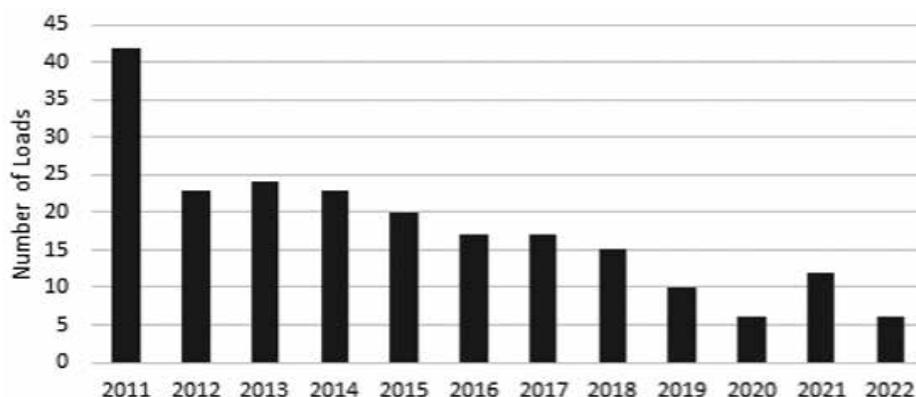
Vermont produces over 2 billion pounds of milk each year and to have a total of approximately 330,000 lbs. disposed of due to drug residues from six loads is progress that should

be applauded. Most of us can make more than six mistakes a year.

Enforcement of regulations is not usually an enjoyable topic for the person being regulated. Vermont's dairy farming community has responded to these rules by learning, growing, adapting, and offering the safest and most wholesome products they can from of their farm. The Dairy Section is grateful to work with Vermont's dairy farms as they continue to harvest milk each day under strict regulations that must meet federal and state standards. The Agency is pleased with the progress dairy farms have made in working with these regulations to minimize mistakes while becoming a national leader on responsible handling of cattle and their medical treatments. Managing a dairy farm is complex and, on this topic, our farmers are working with regulations to be excellent producers of safe for consumption milk.

For more information, contact Ian Wilson by phone: 802-828-2433 or by email: ian.wilson@vermont.gov

Positive Loads Per Year, 2011-2022



DAIRY BUSINESS INNOVATION CENTER

Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center Grants

By Katie Spring, Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center

Dairy Processor Expansion Grant

The Existing Dairy Processor Expansion Grant is now open to applicants across the Northeast. With a total of \$12 million in funding, this grant will fund specialized equipment to help processors increase the use of regionally sourced milk and expand regional dairy processing capacity.

To accommodate processors of all scales, this grant is broken into three tiers. Tiers 1 and 2 are invited to submit pre-applications now through May 11. Tier 3 processors are invited to submit a single-stage application, which is open now.

Processors can view a recording of an informational webinar and access the Request for

Applications for all Tiers on our website: agriculture.vermont.gov/dbic/grants/existing-dairy-processor-expansion-grant

Dairy Farm Cohort Technical Assistance Contract

The NE-DBIC seeks Requests for Proposals for Dairy Farm Cohorts, our innovative approach to Technical Assistance.

Interested contractors may submit a proposal to offer cohort-based TA for dairy farmers in one

or more of these areas: increased grazing quality or quantity, home-grown forage enhancement, alternative herd management, innovative staffing and business management, and marketing and education of dairy production practices.

Contractors will have the flexibility to work with dairy farmers of any scale, type of dairy animal, certification status, and current condition of the farm. Contracts will be issued for up to

\$150,000. Total funds available \$450,000.

The Request for Proposal deadline is Friday, May 26 at 4:30 p.m. Learn more on our website: agriculture.vermont.gov/dbic/grants/cohort-dairy-technical-assistance-contract

Dairy Marketing & Branding Services Grant

The Dairy Marketing and Branding Services Grant Program is open now to established value-added dairy processors and

producer associations. With funds to access professional marketing and branding services, this grant helps value-added processors increase the exposure and promotion of regionally produced dairy products through support from marketing and branding professionals.

Past grantees have used grant funding to develop digital and print marketing materials, branded packaging, and create and launch a

digital marketing strategy. Awards will range from \$10,000 - \$50,000 with a match requirement of 25%. Additionally, up to 25% of the grant funds may be used to implement the strategy and/or content developed by the contractor.

Application deadline is Thursday, June 8 at 2:00 p.m. Learn more on our website: agriculture.vermont.gov/dbic/grants/cohort-dairy-technical-assistance-contract

Visit a Commercial Goat Dairy with UVM Extension

By Kelsie Meehan, UVM Extension

Join UVM Extension this spring for a series of farm tours at commercial goat dairies across the state. Tour participants will connect with other goat dairy producers and with Extension dairy specialists to see and discuss parlor and barn design, herd health, goat dairy financials, grazing, considerations for value-added production, and more. Goat dairy producers of all sizes, those interested in starting or transitioning to goat dairy production, and agricultural service providers are all welcome!

May Goat Farm Tour Dates and Locations:

- May 10, 2023: Bridgman Hill Farm, Hardwick, 12 noon to 2 p.m.
- May 23, 2023: Tup's Crossing Farm, Orwell, 12 noon to 2 p.m.
- May 26, 2023: Ayers Brook Goat Dairy, Randolph, 12 noon to 2 p.m.

- May 31, 2023: Blue Ledge Farm, Salisbury, 12 noon to 2 p.m.

All events are free, and registration is requested. Coffee and light snacks will be provided. Register at go.uvm.edu/goatdairy tours

This event is sponsored by UVM Extension, the

Center for Rural Studies at UVM, Vermont Creamery, and the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center. For more information, to request a disability-related accommodation to participate in this program, or to ask program questions, contact Kelsie Meehan at kelsie.meehan@uvm.edu



Spring Manure Stewardship Reminder

By Sonia Howlett, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

While the winter manure spreading ban formally ends on April 1 of each year, please remember that there are additional requirements laid out in the Required Agricultural Practices (RAP) that are intended to prevent runoff.

It should be common knowledge by now that the RAPs prohibit application of manure to saturated, snow-covered, or frozen ground, on top of bedrock, or before major rain events at any time of year. These requirements should make common sense — you are

restricted from spreading manure where that manure is unlikely to infiltrate into the ground and would pose a significant potential of surface runoff to waters of the State.

Trends in Vermont's weather show increasing precipitation through the spring season, rising temperatures, and more extreme precipitation events. These conditions provide the potential for increased flooding and require farmers and custom manure applicators to remain vigilant through the spring season.

Individual field conditions will vary significantly across the State. So, when you start planning to spread manure this spring, take a moment

to check the ground conditions and ensure that you are in compliance with the rules and are protecting Vermont's waterways.

If you still have capacity in your manure pit, wait for

the optimal weather and field conditions for spreading.

Remember — after spreading any nutrient (liquid or solid manure, compost, or fertilizer) be sure to keep

accurate records of the manure or nutrients applied.

If you have questions relating to manure spreading restrictions, please call the Agency of Agriculture at 802-828-2431 to learn more.



Vermaple

continued from page 1

towns with a way to navigate the regulation of farm development without impeding farm operations. Section 4413(d) of Title 24 (Municipal and County Government) of Vermont Statutes Annotated (V.S.A.) is the statute that describes this in more detail. In summary, farms are required to notify their town of proposed construction of farm structures and be in compliance with town setback requirements unless otherwise approved by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, but are not required to have a permit. Often, towns will include this language in their bylaws to simplify the process for farmers. Others may add



caption

provisions to make accessory farmer dwelling structures or on-farm business structures.

In the case of Vermaple, LLC, they applied for the Farm Operation and Structure Determination so they could put a pump house on their property that would help move sap from their sugarbush to their

storage area. They needed to ensure the pump house had enough space for pumps and people alike, with heating utilities to keep the pumps from freezing. This business is based in the town of Bakersfield, which requires a notification and a letter of determination from the state in order to construct

a farm structure but does not require a permit. The Curtis family worked closely with their town and the state to make sure that they were following all rules and regulations as they set up for longer-term expansion.

Now, Vermaple, LLC operates with two pump houses that store their sap before it goes to their sugar house for boiling, with their average yields ranging from around 200-300 gallons per boil. In the first two seasons, their largest boil was only 90 gallons, so this has significantly increased their efficiency.

If you're a small farm seeking ways to expand and construct new structures make sure to contact your local Zoning Administrator for guidance as early as possible in

the process. Regardless of local zoning bylaws and guidance, all farms MUST notify their town of proposed construction of farm structures. A Farm Determination from the Agency of Agriculture may not be required, but may be requested if your town needs it to determine construction requirements and zoning for proposed farming activities and proposed farm structures.

For more information on Farm Determinations and the Required Agricultural Practices, visit <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/water-quality/regulations/farm-definitions-and-determinations> or contact Noah Gilbert-Fuller at Noah.Gilbert-Fuller@vermont.gov or (802) 505-3407.

VERMONT AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEM PLAN 2021 – 2030:

Specialty Foods

Editor's note: This brief is part of the Vermont Agriculture & Food System Plan 2021-2030 submitted to the legislature in January 2021. To read the full plan, please go to <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/document/vermont-agriculture-and-food-system-strategic-plan-2021-2030>



Lead Author: Holly Fowler, Northbound Ventures Consulting, LLC

Contributing Authors: Erin Sigrist, Vermont Retail & Grocers Association and Vermont Specialty Food Association; Daniel Keeney, Center for an Agricultural Economy and Vermont Food Venture Center; Nancy Warner, Potlicker Kitchen; Lauren Masseria, VAAFM; Annie Harlow, F2P Retail Training Project Consultant; Kim Crosby, Vermont Roots, Inc.

What's At Stake?

Vermont specialty foods are an important subset of the state's overall value-added product market. Food manufacturing is the second-largest manufacturing industry in Vermont, with \$3 billion in economic output.¹ Specialty foods are considered unique, high-quality food items typically produced in smaller quantities than their mass-market counterparts. As such, they may command a higher price point, though increasingly specialty food providers compete against less-expensive, mass-

produced brands.

Many Vermont specialty food companies have grown to be nationally recognized brands. These enterprises create diverse employment opportunities including manufacturing, marketing, distribution, and sales. They are also an avenue for business owners to contribute to the state's food system—ideally through sourcing local raw ingredients—and economic development. Additionally, specialty food items are an important diversification tool for some farmers, providing a critical year-round revenue stream, either from the sale of ingredients to another producer or from manufacture and sale of their own products.

Current Conditions

Vermont specialty foods include pickles,

jams, jellies, relishes, sauces, dressings, chocolates, candy, cheese, yogurt, spreads, vinegars, pastes, marinades, crackers, snacks, cookies, and more. Depending on the type of specialty food, production may occur on the farm, by the producer in a commercially licensed kitchen, at a food-manufacturing facility, or through a private-label or co-packing service.

Many Vermont products highlight regional and local flavors and capitalize on place-based branding that in turn supports the state's many agricultural producers (e.g., Vermont cheeses and dairy farms). Products are sold to consumers via farm stands, as part of community supported agriculture shares,

at farmers markets, online via company websites, and at a wide range of retail markets statewide, nationally, and globally.

Direct-to-consumer sales are critical in the early stages of launching a specialty food product. As businesses grow, they may choose to expand to larger geographic markets by either working directly with regional, national, and international retailers and distributors, utilizing support services such as food brokers or marketing/brand-building businesses, or attending trade shows and other business-to-business events.

Specialty food business models vary from small single operators, to cooperative models, to corporate ownership.

Although business growth is desired, specialty food businesses that attract acquisition by out-of-state companies risk relocation of their operations. While some manage to stay, several businesses recently bought by larger companies have been moved out of the state, resulting in a loss of valuable jobs and state tax revenue.

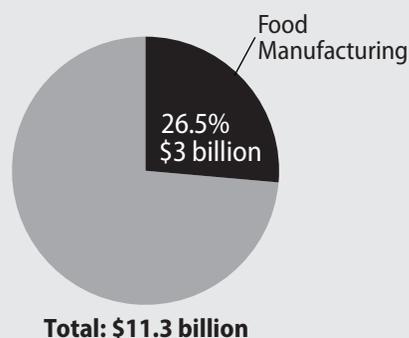
Vermont is home to food business incubators and co-packing facilities which support small food producers and farmers to commercially scale their operations.

Vermont has regional distributors, which focus exclusively on helping Vermont specialty products reach diverse consumer markets (see Major Metropolitan Markets and Distribution briefs).

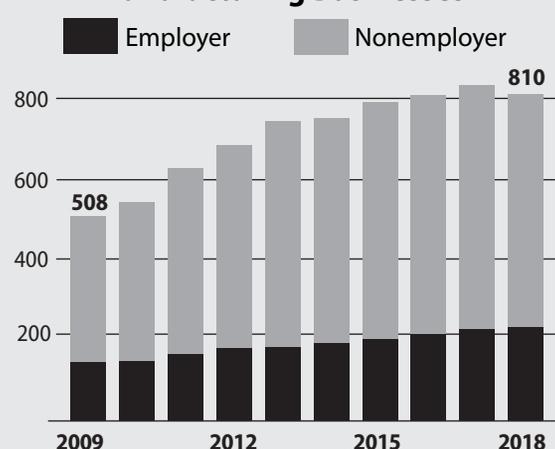
Bottlenecks & Gaps

- Early-stage specialty food producers are challenged to match their operational scale with potential market channels in areas such as labor, order size, delivery frequency and method, price point, and other buyer requirements such as food safety and insurance (see Distribution brief).
- Vermont-produced specialty foods typically require year-round availability, which can limit the use of Vermont-grown ingredients. To manage costs, producers may need to use less-expensive non-Vermont alternatives.
- Purchasing infrastructure and equipment to increase production capacity is capital-intensive, and available equipment is often out of scale with producers' needs.
- Shared production facilities are limited in-state, and using co-packing services can sometimes push a product's end cost of production out of the competitive price point range, potentially forcing Vermont companies out of state to grow their businesses.
- Limited budgets and capacity restrict producer access to professional

2017 Vermont Food System Economic Output



Number of Vermont Food Manufacturing Businesses



development, experienced sales personnel, and marketing to grow their business.

Opportunities

- With creative partnerships and planning, more Vermont-grown inputs could be incorporated in Vermont specialty foods.
- Products originally intended solely for retail sales (e.g., ice cream, tofu, black bean burgers), can be bulk packaged for sale to institutions, thus reaching additional markets and customers.
- More innovative financing options could be made available to develop facilities and infrastructure for processing and shared-use facilities.
- State marketing efforts could go even farther to highlight producers, brands, food and beverage, or agriculture products within Vermont, to both Vermonters and tourists.
- Increased grant funding and expanded state initiatives for promoting brands to outside markets at trade shows could increase awareness and generate new sales prospects beyond Vermont's borders.

Recommendations

- Increase access to low-cost capital and business assistance (including peer-to-peer support) to start, market, promote, and grow specialty food businesses. Enterprise start-up and expansion costs can be significant and it is typically easier to find funding for the infrastructure needs of a business than for the myriad expenses of attorneys, marketing, social media training, mer-

- Fund industry groups' capacity and programs so that they can continue to connect specialty food entrepreneurs with service providers. Aspiring and established specialty food producers benefit from technical assistance, training, and direct support to navigate everything from business licensing and business development to

- partnership agreements and maybe eventual acquisition.
- Fund producer-buyer forums. Local, regional, and national matchmaking events help specialty food entrepreneurs learn about entering different distribution channels, and help buyers to discover new Vermont products which will serve their own customer base and profitability. Local

- producer-buyer forums are a less expensive and time-intensive way for specialty food producers to meet distributors and retailers than regional or national trade shows. Cost: \$60,000 over 3 years.
- Increase funding support for the Working Lands Enterprise Fund to enable specialty food producers a greater chance of securing grant funding,

- since it can be difficult to compete against projects that will have a bigger acreage or labor impact on Vermont's working landscape.
- Adopt economic development policies that enable and incentivize business retention, for example support for increased access to co-packing and production facilities across the state.

There's Still Time to Create Your 2023 Rotational Grazing Plan

By *Sonia Howlett, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets*

Rotational grazing, the practice of containing and moving animals across pasture in a planned schedule, has been around just about forever. It mimics the behavior of migratory or predator-shy wildlife in natural ecological systems and is very similar in essence to the herding that has been practiced by many cultures since the advent of animal agriculture.

If you have animals and sufficient land base, this time of high fuel and feed prices may be a good time to consider a switch to rotational grazing. Allowing animals to travel to find their own feed, rather than purchasing, trucking, harvesting and/or processing feed, can offer significant savings in fuel and input costs. Well-managed rotational grazing can also significantly improve the health of your soil and pastures, improve the quality of your forage and make

your land and business more resilient to changing rainfall patterns. There is no farm in Vermont too big or too small for incorporating at least some rotational grazing into their system, whether it's the whole herd, just the heifers, or your two backyard goats! Some tips to keep in mind:

- Temporary electric fencing is good for new grazers as it is reasonably affordable and designed to be moved. To train new animals to respect the electric fence, consider setting it up just inside the walls of your existing animal pens for a few weeks, fully charged, before turning your animals out.
- Make a plan for how your animals will access water and shade. Avoid unrestricted access to waterways, as animals can and will erode the banks very quickly. Instead consider movable water buckets, fixed watering trough areas, or open laneways back to the barn.
- Make a plan for your rotations: turn out animals

onto well-established pasture in the spring, move them frequently enough to maintain at least 3 inches of residual vegetation, and leave adequate time for your pastures

to regrow before moving animals back into them. Otherwise you run the risk of overgrazing, which can lead to plant and pasture stress and will negatively impact forage quality and quantity. If necessary, you can feed supplemental feed in the barn or another heavy use area to extend the length of your rest period.

- There are many farms in the state who are excellent grazers and managers of livestock. When in doubt, ask a grazing neighbor for advice, or Google "Vermont Pasture Network" list serv to join an email community of grazers in the state. If you are interested in



making the switch to rotational grazing, or improving the grazing you are doing, reach out to a professional pasture specialist and make a grazing plan. In addition to improving your farming and business, working with a grazing specialist and creating a grazing plan can help you access a variety of state Agency of Agriculture and USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service grants for new and existing grazers to install pasture infrastructure or receive annual payments for their grazing practices.

Visit <https://www.uvm.edu/extension/grazing> to learn more and to request to be put in contact with someone from their team!

Apple Pollination: Do You “Know Your Five”?

By Laura Johnson, UVM Extension and Spencer Hardy, Vermont Center for Ecostudies

With more than 350 species of wild bees in Vermont, it's daunting to understand them all. Presented here is a brief overview of apple pollination and some important bees for, and supported by, apple blossoms.

Apple pollination overview: Many apple cultivars are self-incompatible or partially self-fruitful. This requires interplanted compatible pollinizer varieties for pollination and viable fruit set in large single variety blocks. Apple bloom time varies depending on cultivar, but generally apples flower at a time in the spring when there are diverse and abundant wild insect pollinators for pollination. The presence of wild bees has been shown to increase honey bee movement between trees, increasing the chance of cross pollination. In many orchards where wild pollinators are sufficiently abundant, managed bees may not be required for commercial yield and fruit quality.

The Bees

Mining Bees (genus *Andrena*) - Mining Bees are among the most abundant apple pollinators. At least 12 species have been recorded on apples, with the Hawthorn Miner



(*Andrena crataegi*) being the most common. This species is active from mid-May through June. Adding June blooms to a farmscape might help increase numbers of this and other species. Blackberries, American Chestnut, Cilantro, and Staghorn Sumac are all good options for this bee.

Mason Bees (genus *Osmia*) - These shiny blue bees are efficient pollinators of many spring blooming fruits. The Blue Orchard Bee (*Osmia lignaria*) is a well known fruit tree pollinator that is active as early as late March. Females can be identified by the pollen (or pollen collecting hairs) underneath the abdomen. Many species nest above ground in pre-existing cavities (including bee hotels).



Bumble Bees (genus *Bombus*) - These large, charismatic bees are great pollinators of most crops. Queens emerge in early spring and do most of the apple pollination. Smaller workers are born in early June. Early blooming flowers (willows, maples, etc) and nesting habitat (hedgerows and woodlots) are important to maximize local populations. There are 13 species in Vermont, many of which can be identified in the field with practice.

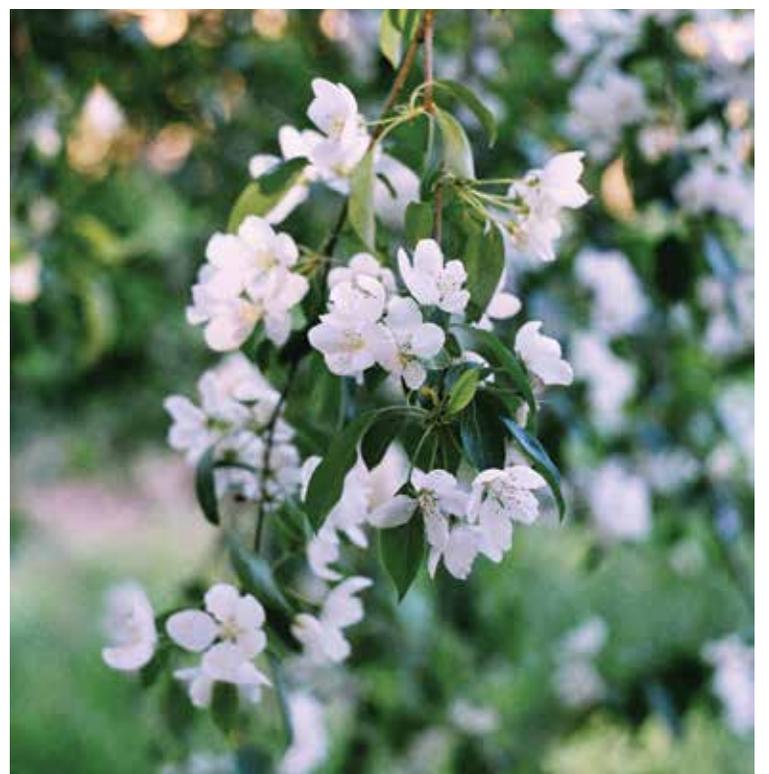


Unequal Cellophane Bee (*Colletes inaequalis*) - This is one of the first bees to emerge in the spring. Often the first sign is “ant” hills with pea-sized holes - the nesting sites of females. Other ground nesting bees make similar nests, but the large aggregations of this species in sandy soil



are particularly noticeable. This species is done flying by early June but is likely an important pollinator of some orchards, especially early blooming ones near sandy soils (preferred nesting habitat).

Pure Green Sweat Bee (*Augochlora pura*) - These brilliant metallic bees are one of several green species that may visit fruit crops. The Pure Green Sweat Bee nests in rotting logs and stumps, and can be abundant in many habitats, especially



around heavy or wet soils where ground nesting bees are sparser. Leaving large logs to rot near an orchard is an easy way to attract this and several other log-nesting species.

For more on “Know Your 5”, visit <https://vtecostudies.org/know-your-5/>





Maple Open House Weekends Showcased Vermont Sugar Makers this March and April

By Allison Hope, Vermont Maple Sugar Makers Association

To celebrate Vermont's sweetest season, Spring Maple Open House Weekends made a triumphant return this year with over 80 Sugar Makers and Maple Partners across

the state opening their doors on Saturday and Sunday, March 25 and 26 and April 1 and 2. Vermont's sugar makers welcomed the chance to show visitors into their sugarhouses to learn, taste, and explore firsthand why people should think of Vermont first when they think of maple syrup.

Vermont continues to lead the nation by a commanding margin as the top maple producing state. Total Vermont maple syrup production in 2022 was 2.55 million gallons, an 800,000 increase over the prior year and about half of the US production of maple syrup. The 2023 crop is off to a

good start and sugar makers look forward to offering you a taste and sharing their craft!

The sap was running, and sugar makers offered many ways to enjoy some traditional and not-so-traditional Open House activities - sugarhouse tours, sampling syrup, tours of the

woods, pancake breakfasts, and plenty of maple products to taste including maple donuts, maple cotton candy and maple ice cream and creemees!

Find all the details at www.VermontMaple.org/MOHW.

Visit <https://vermontmaple.org/> to find all things Vermont maple.



Leasing Land to Farmers: An Overview

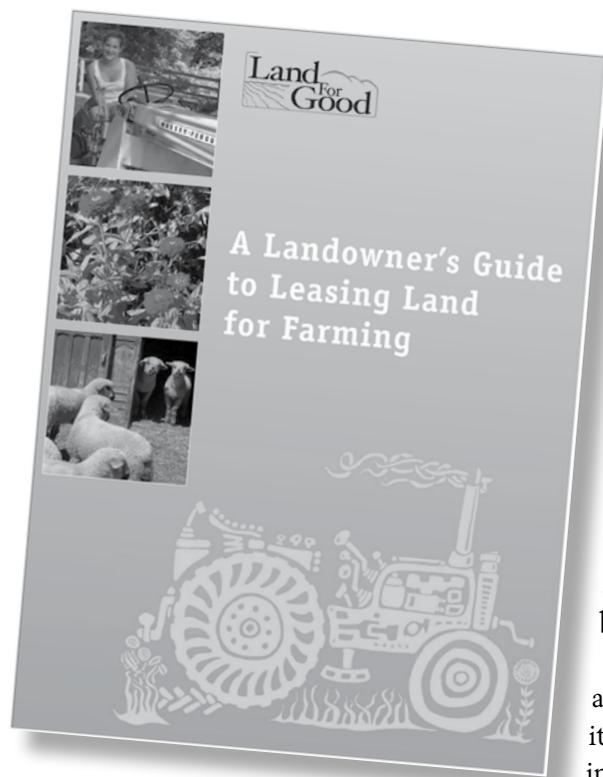
By Vern Grubinger,
UVM Extension

Many people or entities own farmland that they would like to see farmed by someone else, but they may not know how to find the right farmer or how to create an effective lease agreement. Providing advice on these topics can be challenging because there are many possible combinations of land owners, land and property status, and needs of the leasing farmer.

Land owners may be: retiring farmers, farm heirs, non-profit organizations, for-profit businesses, land trusts, or public/government entities. They may or may not need income in the short or long-term, have funds to invest in the property, or want to be engaged with the farm operation.

Farmers looking for land may be: starting a new farm business, moving a farm business, expanding their farm, or taking over a farm business. They may or may not have: lots of experience, a business plan, working capital, equipment and markets.

The land may be: currently farmed, recently farmed, farmed long ago, or never farmed. It may be some combination of farmland, woodland and other lands. The soil may or may not be high quality. Land use restrictions may be absent, or



the land may be under conservation easement, zoned agricultural by the local community, and/or in a state's agricultural use tax abatement program.

Infrastructure desired by potential farmers may or may not be present, including: access roads, barns, greenhouses, housing, electricity, fencing, ponds or wells for water supply, etc. Farmers might propose to install additional infrastructure during the lease term. Farmers and landowners, before moving ahead with a lease, should discuss appropriate siting, construction details, how to cover the cost and what will happen to the infrastructure after the lease term. Here is a checklist for farmers seeking land; it can also be used by landowners to assess their property: <http://www.uvm.edu/new-farmer/land/checklist.pdf>

Lease agreements. At a minimum, all written agreements should specify the name, address and contact

information of each party; the date the lease was executed; the duration of the lease; a clear description of the property or facilities being leased and the purposes for which they may be used; the amount, time and place of payment; rights to extend or renew the lease; and how the lease may be terminated.

Additional issues to address include: liability and other types of insurance, allowable/prohibited farm practices (e.g. organic production, fertilization based on soil test results), responsibility for maintenance of land and structures, and process and status of any future capital investments.

For more information on the legal framework of a lease, see Chapter III in the Legal Guide to the Business of Farming in Vermont: <http://www.uvm.edu/farm-transfer/LegalGuideIII.pdf>

Types of leases include: a year-to-year lease, multi-year lease, 'rolling' or renewable lease, lease with option to buy or a right of first refusal, and/or transfer by sale of some or all of farmland over the short or long-term. Shorter term agreements can be more appealing to beginning farmers, but if they succeed they may depart for a site with longer-term land security. Thus, landowners not willing to offer long term agreements may have to deal with a series of beginning farmers rather than a suc-

cessful business that stays put. The long-term agreement does not have to be the first step but it should be on the table if the owner wants the relationship to work so a farmer can invest for the long haul without risk of losing access to the land. Sample leases can be found here: <http://sustainablefarmlease.org/2010/06/form-leases/>

Landowner goals. The first step is for the family or organization that owns the land to come to agreement on their goals. How much annual income is hoped for? What type of farm activities are desired, which are not? How long a relationship is hoped for with a farmer? How much investment, if any, will be made by the owner, for what purposes?

Farm enterprises vary a lot. Landowners need to consider the needs and impacts of different types of farming activities. Low impact/low cost farm activities (like haying, grazing animals) generate little revenue per unit of land, and have the lowest 'disturbance' factor for on-site owners or neighbors. As one goes up the 'farming intensity chain' (growing Christmas trees, blueberries, for example) there is more revenue, more investment required, more need for land security for the farmer, and more potential for impact on neighbors.

The highest-revenue generating activities (many fruits and vegetables, greenhouse crops, intensive animal production) require a lot of capital investment (buildings, equipment, irrigation, fence-

ing, storage), need long-term land tenure and infrastructure agreements if they are to succeed over time, and will lead to frequent human activity, equipment use, noise, odors and/or traffic which may be disturb nearby non-farmers. Intensive farming operations also tend to benefit from, or require, on-site housing, since ongoing attention is needed to on-site activities. Housing in a town nearby is the next best option but may not be ideal. On-site housing for workers may also be desirable or necessary.

To recruit the right farmer it is important for the farmland owner to clearly and specifically describe what they have to offer, what they expect in return, which terms are fixed and which are negotiable.

Farmers seeking to supplement their current land to grow crops or graze animals will usually be recruited from relatively close by (because transportation of equipment and animals is costly) through word of mouth and/or local advertising. Recruitment of farmers to start or relocate a business usually involves far-flung recruitment. There are many young people with skill and experience and sometimes capital looking for farmland. An application/review process prior to meeting prospective farmers can save both parties a lot of time.

The recruitment process can be informal or it may be more like a job interview. Simply conversing over the phone or in person is a com-

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CLASSIFIEDS

To place a classified ad in *Agriview* sign up to be a paid subscriber — visit our website: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/administration/vaafm-news/agriview/advertising-agriview>

Email: Ag.agriview@vermont.gov, phone: 802-828-1619. Deadline for submissions is the 1st of each month for next month's issue. Example: January 1st deadline for February issue.

Cattle

Cow and calf pairs from closed Certified Organic herd. Mixed breeds, reasonable prices. 802-254-6982 (8)

Dexters for sale. 6 cows (open) 1 red, 2 dunn, 3 black, 3 steers. All dehorned. Animals are in great condition. 802-356-5988 Windsor County (8)

Jersey cows available: closed herd in Highgate; organic, grass-only, some A2A2, vaccinated, awaiting results of disease testing. 802-370-1051 (8)

Angus bull for sale, he is proven and 4 years old. Call for more info. (802)-558-8196 (8)

Employment

Equipment Operator. Crop Production Assistant. CSA Coordinator & Wash Pack Manager. All positions with details at root5farm.com (5)

4 year old angus proven bull. If interested, contact me at 802-558-8196 (8)

Equipment

4.5 ton grain bin, 6.5 ton grain bin, (2) 8 ton grain bins

priced to sell. 38 John Deere hay elevator. 16 ft New Holland hay elevator. 802-624-0143.(5)

Meyers Snow plow 8'6" wide \$800. 7-yard dump body on INK Truck \$1500. 802-558-0166 (5)

Gehl 5640 skid steer-82 HP-2 speed -New Tires Has steel Tracks -2675 hrs. \$19,995 (5)

Horsepower Delaval vacuum pump, good shape. 3 Pt: 7 ft back blade. 8 ton grain bins, 32 ft John Deere hay elevator, 16 ft new holland hay elevator. 802-893-4683, 802-624-0143 (7)

Micro Cheeseplant Equipment: AlpineGlo Farm is looking to sell all cheese house contents as one package, this includes a 30 gallon pasteurizer. Real estate is not included in the sale. For a complete list of inventory and details please contact the farm directly. Located in Southern Vermont. Asking \$30,000 Contact Rachel Ware at rachel@alpineglofarm.com or (802) 463-2018 www.alpineglofarm.com (7)

60-gallon Upright Milkplan Bulk Tank \$3700 Semen Tank \$300 Pick Up Only, Killington VT Call 802-490-5712 (7)

Two tecumscac gasoline power tapers for tapping sugarbush. \$75 each or both for \$125. Both start and run great. Tap up to 150 taps on one tank gas. 802-291-4525. Call or text. Royalton. (8)

1 8ft snow blower \$2300. 1 5ft international snow blower \$1300. 802-624-0143

Equine

Trailer – 2 horse thorobred size, dressing room, ramp and tag along. 802-345-8026 (6)

6 stable available, indoor arena. Outdoor paddocks, do all work yourself and all feed. Slight fee for water & lights. 802-345-8026 (6)

General

Beautifully restored doctor's buggy and Irish Brougham coach. Call 802-451-6813 for



photos & details. (8)

Hay, Feed & Forage

Certified Organic wrapped round bales for sale. approx 50%dry matter. Have forage sample results for 3rd cut, \$45,00/ 50.00 per bale depending on which hay is taken. Call or text 1-802-210-5279 (5)

4x5 round bales. Early 1st cut. 802-265-4566 (6)

4x4 Wrapped Round Bales, 1st cut 2022 for sale. \$45/bale 4x4 Dry Round Bales, \$50/ bale 4x4 Wrapped Round Bales, 1st cut 2021 \$40/bale Pickup at the farm. 1710 Wild Apple Road, South Pomfret, 05067 Call Tom at 802-457-5834 (6)

Good Quality First cut netted large dry round bales, \$50 Excellent Quality First cut 9x200 ft Ag Bags of 2021 Haylage early cut Delivery available, David Leblanc 802-988-2959 or 802-274-2832 (6)

Organic round bales for sale. Well wrapped, tedded, June cut, 2022. Never wet; sweet smell. I load, you haul. \$35 at the farm. Easy access for trailer or truck. Thistle Hill Farm. N. Pomfret, VT info@ThistleHillFarm.com. (7)

Certified Organic Wrapped Round Bales for sale. All hay is tedded and feeds out like it's dry. 4.5' by 4' bales. Early and late 1st cut @ \$45/ bale. 2nd and 3rd cut @ \$55/bale. N. Danville 802-748-8461. (8)

CHITTENDEN COUNTY

June cut Hay, Never wet, 4' X 5' Round Bales, \$35/bale loaded, Cash/good check only, Westford, Ray @802-355-2930 (5)

FRANKLIN COUNTY

Good quality hay 1c & 2c from western US & Canada. Alfalfa orchard and orchard sweet grass. 18 to 20% plus protein. Large bales and organic by trailer loads. Large or small square bales of straw whole or processed at farm we load or direct delivery by trailer load. 802-849-6266 or 802-373-5217 (12)

RUTLAND COUNTY

Small square bales. First cut. 210 available at \$5 each. 802-773-8716 (6)

WASHINGTON COUNTY

Small square bales – 1st cut \$6.00 or less for quantity. 802-793-3511 (4)

Small square bales - 1st and 2nd cut; excellent quality. \$5.00/ bale at the Paquet Farm, Barre 802-476-5082 (8)

Sheep & Goats

Now taking orders for our 2023 registered Alpine kids. Lazy Lady Farm, with 35 years of breeding experience will have doe and buck kids, from 30 does, available starting in March. We have a 2800# herd average with DHIA testing. We are CAE,CL and Johnes free with annual testing. Visit www.lazyladyfarm.com. for farm info and our sales list. 802-595-4473 laini@lazyladyfarm.com (6)

For Agricultural Events and Resources Visit:

- The VT Agency of Agriculture Events Calendar: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/calendar>
- UVM Extension Events Calendars: https://www.uvm.edu/extension/extension_event_calendars
- Vermont Farm to Plate Events Calendar: <https://www.vtfarmtoplate.com/events>
- Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont Events Calendar: <http://nofavt.org/events>
- DigIn Vermont Events Calendar: <https://www.diginvt.com/events/>
- Agricultural Water Quality Regulations: <http://agriculture.vermont.gov/water-quality/regulations>
- Agency of Ag's Tile Drain Report now available here: <http://agriculture.vermont.gov/tile-drainage>
- VAAFM annual report available here: http://agriculture.vermont.gov/about_us/budgets_reports
- Farm First: Confidential help with personal or work-related issues. More info call: 1-877-493-6216 any-time day or night, or visit: www.farmfirst.org
- Vermont AgrAbility: Free service promoting success in agriculture for people with disabilities and their families. More info call 1-800-639-1522, email: info@vcil.org or visit: www.vcil.org.

For more agricultural events visit our *Funding Opportunities & Resources for Businesses* webpage at: http://agriculture.vermont.gov/producer_partner_resources/funding_opportunities

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Ice House Farm dairy goat kids available. Disease free herd. Saanen & Alpine lines averaging over 4,000 pounds of milk per season. Call 802-247-1443 (8)

Alpine kids \$200. CAE/CL/Johnes negative. ADGA top genetics. <http://www.sagefarmgoatdairy.com> Katie

802-461-9025 kpindell@gmail.com (8)

Wanted

Hay elevator in good working condition with motor 24' is perfect. Email Israel1@gmail.com for pic and info. Call Israel at 802-563-6061 (7)

Maltese pup or young dog 802-885-6450 (8)

A 1941 farm license plate with the prefix AGR. Also need a 1944 farm plate. Terry at 802-885-5405 (6)

Help Wanted year round on our organic livestock (Angus beef, pork, lamb) farm in N. Danville, Vt. Part time position consists of morning chores (7:30 am-10:30am) Monday thru Friday and

every other weekend. Full time position possible for someone willing to do chores and who has experience with outdoor work (fencing, haying, logging) as well. We also would allow someone to use the farm to produce for themselves and market through our on farm store (chicken, eggs, produce, etc). Pay depends on experience with entry level at \$15/hr. We would assist someone from out of town in finding rental housing. Email Vince Foy at badgerbrookmeats@gmail.com or call 802-748-8461. (8)

Windham County area, and is looking to pass on the business locally as sales outlets and a strong customer base are in place. This is an opportunity to step right into a functioning business. Inventory includes a herd of 13 ADGA Alpine Dairy Goats (10 currently due to kid in April), all milk parlor contents, and all cheese house contents including 30 gallon pasteurizer. Real estate is not included, this is to be set up on your property. For full details and inventory please contact the farm directly. Located in Southern Vermont (Westminster). Contact Rachel Ware at rachel@alpineglofarm.com or (802) 463-2018. Please, serious inquiries only. (8)

Upcoming Grant Opportunities

The Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets is pleased to be able to help you more easily identify upcoming grant opportunities. Please go to <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/grants/calendar> for more information.

Programs Open Year-Round

Farmstead Best Management Practices (BMP) Program

Technical and financial assistance for engineered conservation practices on Vermont farms.

Jenn LaValley

Jenn.LaValley@vermont.gov

802-828-2431

Pasture And Surface Water Fencing (PSWF) Program

Technical and financial assistance for pasture management and livestock exclusion from surface water on Vermont farms.

Mary Montour

Mary.Montour@vermont.gov

802-461-6087

Grassed Waterway and Filter Strip (GWFS) Program

Technical and financial assistance for implementing buffers and seeding down critical areas on VT farms.

Sonia Howlett

Sonia.Howlett@vermont.gov

802-522-4655

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

Implementation costs of vegetated buffers and rental payments for maintained buffers on Vermont agricultural land.

Ben Gabos

Ben.Gabos@Vermont.gov

802-461-3814

Phil Wilson

Phillip.Wilson@vermont.gov

802-505-5378

April – June

Dairy Marketing & Branding Services Grant

Grants for established value-added dairy processors and producer associations to access professional marketing and branding services.

Kathryn Donovan

Kathryn.Donovan@vermont.gov

802-585-4571

June

Farm Agronomic Practices (FAP) Program

Per-acre payments for conservation practices on Vermont farms and support for one-time water quality educational events or trainings

Sonia Howlett

Sonia.Howlett@vermont.gov

802-522-4655

June

Existing Dairy Processor Expansion Grant: Tier 3

Tiered grants for specialized equipment needed to increase processing capacity of regionally produced milk

Ben Eldredge

Ben.Eldredge@vermont.gov

802-522-9478

Early Summer 2023

Dairy Packaging Innovation Grant

Grants to support modernized packaging initiatives that prioritize sustainability, scalability, and marketability

Kathryn Donovan

Kathryn.Donovan@vermont.gov

802-585-4571

For Sale

Entire Micro Dairy and Cheese House For Sale: AlpineGlo Farm has been successfully making farmstead goat cheeses since 2016 in the

Leasing Land

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mon approach when local farmers are recruited to lease land for low-intensity activities such as haying. A more formal process is advisable if farmers are sought for relatively intensive enterprises and/or longer-term lease agreements. Asking farmers to 'apply' in writing by answering a list of questions can help save time by screening out farmers that are not a good fit with the landowner's goals, and this approach may also identify issues that require some thought before a face to face meeting. The application can be simple or detailed, but at a minimum it should describe the farmer's agricultural experience, the farm activities they want to establish, the infrastructure they will need, the markets they intend to serve, whether or not they have a business plan, and a list of references.

What the farmland is worth in rent will vary

depending on the enterprise of the farmer and the benefit to the landowner. It may be reasonable to charge the farmer little or nothing to hay fields, especially if they lime and fertilize, otherwise one would pay for these services. For more intensive operations in the start-up phase, it makes sense charge a very low rent initially and build towards a maximum that does not exceed a percentage of their net income. Here is a guide to help determine the value of rented farmland:

- <http://www.uvm.edu/new-farmer/land/RentalGuide.pdf>
- <https://landforgood.org/wp-content/uploads/LFG-Landowners-Guide-To-Leasing-To-A-Farmer-Handbook.pdf>

Additional resources: *A Landowner's Guide to Leasing Land for Farming.* <http://landforgood.org/wp-content/uploads/LFG-Landowners-Guide-To-Leasing-To-A-Farmer-Handbook.pdf>

How Are You Managing Your Stress?

Submitted by Farm First

You may have heard that not all stress is bad – and that’s true. Acute stress triggers cortisol, which can be energizing, focusing, and motivating – all things we need to escape danger. Our bodies and minds are built for handling that type of stress for short bursts of time, and then recovering. How fast we recover from a bout of stress is a measure of resiliency.

What our bodies and minds are less equipped for is ongoing or chronic stress, where there is crisis after crisis, or even small, nagging stressors that keep the cortisol flowing day in and day out. Kind of like farming.

Everyone tolerates and manages their stressors differently. Some people go from challenge to chal-

lenge, volleying whatever comes their way like a pro tennis player. For other people, it may feel more like they are being tackled by a pro football player every day and end up feeling pretty beat up by the end of the season. And for others, it may seem like they’re keeping up well, but the stress is taking its toll in other ways, like in relationships or unhealthy coping mechanisms.

Would you like a stress management check-in?

A stress management check-in is a 45-minute conversation with a Farm First Wellness Coach to learn about your lifestyle and how you’re managing stress, and a follow-up session three months later. If desired, they can offer you free resources.

For participating in the check-in and follow-up

sessions, farmers will receive a total of \$100.

Check-in conversations can take place at your farm or via Zoom.

Sign-up by calling the

Farm First Wellness Coach, Gretchen Webber at (802) 277-7989 or send an email to GretchenW@farmfirst.org

Check-ins are only available for the first 50

participants, so reach out to Gretchen today!

Contact Farm First if you have any other questions or concerns at (802) 318-5538.

BUSINESS SENSE

Next Level Tools for Entrepreneurs & Small Business Owners



For more information go to <https://www.vsjf.org/services/business-coaching/business-sense/> or call 802-828-1098.

For Immediate Release

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets have received an application for a Milk Handlers license from the following entity: Greyfell Farm, of Saxtons River, Vermont to buy/sell, transport and package milk within the State of Vermont. If anyone has germane information as to why or why not this company should or should not be licensed those comments are to be sent to:

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture Food and Markets
Dairy Section Office
116 State Street, Montpelier, VT 05620-2901

All written comments must be received by May 15, 2023.

At that time the Agency will make a determination as to whether a hearing will be held. If we determine that a hearing is necessary and you wish to attend please write to the above address attention Dairy Section.

Pesticide Applicator Certification Exams

By Stephanie Smith, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

Are you ready to take a Pesticide Applicator certification exam? Have you studied the appropriate materials? Do you know which exam or exams you need to become certified or licensed? Are you 18 or older? To take an exam you must register by contacting the Certification & Training coordinator at least a week (7 days) in advance at 802-461-6118.

All exams are given by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets.

- All exams are CLOSED BOOK
- Please bring a calculator
- Please bring a current, state-issued, picture ID (required)

There is no cost to sit for (take) exams, however there is a fee for obtaining certification.

Montpelier
Every Wednesday
9:00 am – 12:00 pm

St. Johnsbury
Monthly
Every 2nd Thursday
9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Newport
Monthly
1st Thursday
9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Williston
Bi-weekly
1st and 3rd Thursdays
9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Rutland
Monthly
1st Tuesday
1:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Brattleboro
Monthly
1st Thursday
9:00 am – 12:00 pm

New England Dairy Hosts Webinar on Animal Agriculture's Path to Climate Neutrality

By Elicia Pinsonault,
New England Dairy

With improvements in breeding, animal health, and farm management practices, the environmental impact of producing a gallon of milk has shrunk significantly in recent decades. Today, dairy makes up approximately two percent of total greenhouse gas emissions in the United States. Despite this progress, dairy – and animal

agriculture as a whole – is often shouldered with a large part of the blame when it comes to climate change.

New England Dairy is hosting “Rethinking Methane: Animal Agriculture’s Path to Climate Neutrality”, a webinar led by Dr. Frank Mitloehner on May 23, 2023, from 2-3 p.m.

Dr. Mitloehner is a professor and air quality specialist in cooperative extension in the Department of Animal Science at University of

California-Davis. He is also the director of the CLEAR Center.

After this webinar, attendees will be able to identify

different greenhouse gases and their impact on the environment, discuss agriculture’s impact on climate change, and identify scalable solu-

tions used in animal agriculture to fight climate change.

Register online at newenglanddairy.com/continuing-education.

Food Safety & Fiddleheads

By University of Maine Extension

Fiddleheads, an early spring delicacy throughout the Northeast and Canadian Maritime Provinces, are the young, coiled fronds of the ostrich fern (*Matteuccia struthiopteris*). Nearly all ferns have fiddleheads, but not all fiddleheads are edible.



The Ostrich fern fiddleheads are edible, and can be identified by the brown, papery scale-like covering on the uncoiled fern. Fiddleheads are approximately 1 inch in diameter, have a smooth fern stem (not fuzzy), and also a deep “U”-shaped groove on the inside of the fern stem. Look for ostrich ferns emerging in clusters of about three to twelve fiddleheads per plant on the banks of rivers, streams, brooks, and in the woods in late April, May, and early June depending on your location. Make sure that you obtain landowner permission before harvesting fiddleheads.

For more information on fiddlehead harvesting this spring, check out the refresher on food safety and cooking recommendations from UMaine Extension.

Review the fiddlehead food safety bulletin at <https://extension.umaine.edu/publications/4198e/>.

Watch the fiddlehead cooking and preserving video at <https://youtu.be/JpxNLA3zyvw>.

Do you own land in agricultural production that is not very productive and...

- Want to receive payments for some of this land?
- And/or need help paying for and installing necessary grazing infrastructure?

If so, consider enrolling in the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)! CREP takes agricultural land that is located along waterways and is currently in perennial or annual crops out of production to plant riparian forest buffers. Landowners receive an up-front incentive payment as well as annual rental payments for the 15-year duration of the contract, and the costs of the project are nearly always covered at 100% by the FSA, Partners for Fish & Wildlife, and CREP.

For more information and to find out if you qualify, please contact Ben Gabos (802-461-3814 or ben.gabos@vermont.gov) or Phillip Wilson (802-505-5378 or phillip.wilson@vermont.gov)

Vermont Fairs and Field Days 2023

Vermont Fairs will continue to follow state and federal COVID-19 guidelines. Please know that the situations are still changing frequently so we suggest you visit the individual Fair’s web site for the most current information.

Vermont Dairy Festival	June 1 - 4
The Bradford Fair	July 14-16, 2023
Lamoille County Field Days	July 21-23, 2023
Pownal Valley Fair	TBD
Deerfield Valley Farmers Day	August 10-13, 2023
Franklin County Field Days	August 3-6, 2023
Addison County Fair & Field Day	August 8-12, 2023
Vermont State Fair	August 15-19, 2023
Caledonia County Fair	August 23-27, 2023
Bondville Fair	August 25-27, 2023
Champlain Valley Fair	August 25 - September 3, 2023
Guilford Fair	September 3-4, 2023
Orleans County Fair	September 6-10, 2023
The Tunbridge Fair	September 14-17, 2023

The Tree House Hardwoods

Meeting Demand for Vermont Maple Countertops

By Laura Hardie, Red Barn Writer

When The Tree House Hardwoods opened its doors in South Burlington, Vermont, in 2014, the mission was to keep it simple and sell lumber with basic services like planing boards.

Nearly a decade later, the operation has expanded three times to accommodate complex wood projects, like ornate replica column bases for historical buildings and custom molding. Most of their growth, though, comes from the increasing demand for butcher block countertops made from Vermont maple.

“We have more demand than we have production capacity. We just can’t produce butcher blocks as fast as people want to buy them no matter how much we do,” said Adam Claussen, who works in the mill shop.

Owner Lucas Jenson says they’ve found their audience among buyers who understand the value of integrating wood into their homes.

“There is a butcher block mentality or butcher block state of mind,” Jenson explained. “Some people are totally fine with a Corian or a laminated countertop. People interested in a butcher block countertop... there’s something about the quality of the environment they’ve chosen to live in.”

One thing is immediately evident upon seeing the quality of craftsmanship and passion The Tree House team brings to their work:



Jude Dirks of Treehouse Hardwoods using new equipment.



The team at Tree House Hardwoods.

Grant received: \$75,000

Project: Purchasing equipment to increase butcher block production 7x over

Vermont Maple Lumber Purchased: 7,000 more boardfeet per year

wood is their art form, and it’s anything but simple. Their signature Vermont Butcherblock Company countertops are made in a multi-step process that normally takes eight to ten weeks to deliver after a customer orders.

It’s a process they say will soon be cut to only two to three weeks as part of their most recent facility upgrade, made possible by a \$75,000 Working Lands Enterprise Initiative (WLEI) grant.

“This equipment has been transformative. It has transformed this shop more than anything else we’ve ever done since we started,”

Jenson said.

In the fall of 2022, three new pieces of equipment were purchased with the grant funds, and the workshop space was expanded to create room.

Within just a few months of the upgrade, the team saw a 50 percent reduction in the time it takes to produce a butcherblock countertop. The impact is evident in every area of the business, including their retail store, where butcher blocks can be purchased off the shelf for the first time.

“This equipment has allowed us to leap forward from a wood shop into more of a manufacturing and production facility,” workshop manager Jeremy Ravelin said. “We still do customized work, but this allows us to have butcher blocks in stock and not have every single one be a special order.”

Their new gang rip saw cuts a board into multiple butcherblock strips with one pass rather than three to

four passes.

“It’s easily seven or eight times faster than the way we were doing it before. This week, we ran about 3,000 board feet of maple into strips in three hours. Before,

it would have taken us three or four days,” Claussen said of the process.

Read the full story at workinglands.vermont.gov/blog/treehousehardwoods

Agency Contact Numbers

To help you find the right number for your question, please consult the list below. You are always welcome to call our main line 802-828-2430. We will do our best to route you to person most able to answer your question quickly and accurately.

Program Phone Numbers

Act 250	802-461-6798
Animal Health	802-828-2421
Business Development	802-828-1619
Dairy	802-828-2433
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Working Lands	802-917-2637

Farm to Spoon: The Making of Local Goat Gelato

By Katie Spring, Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center at VAAFM

Drive down Main Street in Vergennes, and you'll come upon a brick building with blue-framed windows and a bright yellow door. Open the door, and you'll step into Lu-Lu's: a year-round local ice cream shop.

"Lu-Lu is actually a word in the dictionary that means something outstanding and remarkable," says owner, Laura Mack. "Every day we produce small batch, from scratch ice cream and gelato using all local ingredients. We really capitalize on the flavors of Vermont from local farmers." In March, Lu-Lu's unveiled a new product made in partnership with Midnight Goat Farm: local goat gelato.

Created with support from the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center



Laura Mack, owner of Lu-Lu's Artisan Ice Cream, in the scoop shop.

(NE-DBIC) Goat & Sheep Supply Chain grant, this new product helps expand the use of local goat milk and highlights the ripple effects our grants have throughout communities. The funding Lu-Lu's received helped bring what was once a "wouldn't it be cool if..." notion to fruition as a new product line that not only expands the ice cream business, but also offers a new sales outlet to Midnight Goat Farm, who previously focused solely on cheese production.

"We've found that we're actually making more money on selling the fluid milk than we did processing the cheese," said Yves Gonnet, owner of Midnight Goat Farm. "It's a bit mind-blowing."

Supply chain innovation and strengthening connections between dairy farmers and processors leads to a more resilient—and delicious—dairy food system. Building up producer-processor relationships is one result of NE-DBIC grants.

"The Dairy Business

Innovation Center encouraged me to really dive into [making goat gelato]. We now have a full line, we're advocating it for grocery stores, and it's allowing us to make it bigger than we could have ever done," said Mack.

Gonnet also pointed out the impact of the Sheep & Goat Dairy Supply Chain Grant, saying, "It allows

people to experiment. There's not a lot of margin in farming or in food service, so you don't typically take a lot of risk." Grant funding softened that risk and gave Mack the leeway to test and develop a new product.

As Lu-Lu's heads into the summer production season, Mack is thinking of how to expand the goat gelato line. "We're really confident that we can go find another farmer and say, 'We know how to do this. We know what we need to do, what you need to do, let's build another partnership,'" said Mack.

The NE-DBIC offers grants to support dairy farmers and processors across the region. Visit our website to learn more and see our funding calendar: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/dbic>



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